



Helen Police Department

Standard Operating Policies and Procedures

Chapter A-095 Firearms Regulations	Effective Date:	August 1, 2022	# of Pages:	6
	Revised Date:		Distribution Authorization:	<i>Alonna C. Barrett</i>
	Special Instructions:			

I. PURPOSE

To provide guidelines governing firearms issued to police personnel; to establish rules for carrying firearms in the performance of their duty; to provide criteria for the carrying of personally owned backup weapons.

II. SCOPE

This policy shall apply to authorized firearms and ammunition carried by department personnel in the performance of their duty, and while off-duty.

III. ISSUED FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION

- A. Approved weapons for on-duty personnel in uniform will be either a .40 Caliber or 9mm Glock auto-loading pistol, or any weapon approved by the Chief of Police.
- B. Approved weapons for on-duty personnel not in uniform will be either a .40 Caliber or 9mm Glock auto-loading pistol, or any weapon approved by the Chief of Police.
- C. Ammunition for pistols furnished by the department shall be high-grade factory ammunition from a major manufacturer (i.e. Winchester, Remington, Speer, Federal, Hornady), designed for its intended purpose; either duty or training ammunition, and shall not exceed firearms manufacturer's safety regulations.
- D. The department issued shotgun for Officers will be a 12-gauge shotgun of reputable manufacture. Officers carrying issued shotguns will be required

- to demonstrate proficiency with such weapon prior to duty use and annually thereafter.
- E. Ammunition for shotguns shall be high-grade factory ammunition from a reputable manufacturer such as Federal or Winchester. The department shall furnish both “00” Buck as well as rifled slugs for duty use.
 - F. Only weapons and ammunition issued by the department or authorized pursuant to the Backup Weapon policy shall be carried while on duty or on extra-duty.
 - G. Officers shall not alter or modify any firearms issued to them or carried on duty other than within the provisions of this policy under “personally owned weapons mounted lights” (VIII) and “backup weapons” (IV-G).
 - H. The department shall document all firearms issued to officers as well as any approved backup weapons carried by officers.
 - I. Newly hired officers (POST certified) will not carry a department issued weapon until the officer has met department standards for firearms proficiency, unless the officer is a recent graduate of a regional academy. Within 30 days, the officer will complete a department proficiency course of fire.
 - J. Annually, the departmental armorer will inspect each employee’s issued weapons. Weapons found to be deficient shall be removed from service by the armorer, repaired and/or replaced. The employee will receive a replacement weapon until their issued weapon is repaired or replaced.
 - K. All firearms, when not in actual personal physical custody, will be stored and secured in an appropriate locked container (safe, vault, weapons locker, child safety lock, etc.) Firearms will not be left unsecured in unoccupied vehicles.
 - L. When a Department weapon is stored at home, the weapon shall be secured by reasonable and prudent measures examples of which are the use of issued or purchased gun safety locks, gun safe, or a lock box to prevent access by unauthorized persons
 - M. While on duty, uniformed Officers will carry the issued handgun in the issued holster with the magazine fully loaded and a round chambered in the pistol. The officer will also carry two additional magazines fully loaded on the uniform duty belt.

- N. Only Department issued duty ammunition will be carried in the department issued pistol and spare magazines. The use of non-issued ammunition during the course of recreational or sport shooting is authorized.

IV. BACK-UP WEAPONS

- A. Personally owned backup weapons carried by Police Officers is authorized by the Department provided the requirements in this policy are met
- B. Any personally owned backup to be carried must be of one of the following calibers: .380 ACP, .38 Special., .357 Magnum, 9mm Luger, .40 S&W, .45 ACP, .45 GAP
- C. Any personally owned backup must be a handgun of reputable manufacture, make and model as determined by the department armorer or head firearms instructor. Each weapon approved for use by the department must be inspected by the Head Firearms Instructor or Department Armorer at the time of qualification.
- D. Personally owned backup weapons carried on duty will be carried in an inconspicuous manner in a high-quality holster specifically designed for that purpose. Holsters used to carry personally owned backup weapons on duty must be worn in the same manner during the required qualification(s) and are subject to inspection and approval/disapproval by the Department armorer/lead firearms instructor.
- E. Ammunition carried on duty in a personally owned backup weapon is the responsibility of the individual officer. Personally owned backup ammunition will be one of the following types of ammunition in the appropriate caliber: Winchester PDX 1, Speer Gold Dot, Hornady Critical Duty, Hornady Critical Defense, Cor-Bon DPX.
- F. Police Officers choosing to carry a personally owned backup weapon will be required to qualify annually with the weapon. The make, model, and serial number will be provided to the firearms instructor conducting such qualification. Ammunition used during backup qualification shall be the responsibility of the individual officer and must be of sufficient quality to ensure the safe and reliable operation of the backup weapon.
- G. Officers must refrain from altering or modifying a personally owned backup weapon from its factory configuration other than the addition of night sights, after market grips, or grip material. Any modification is subject to inspection and approval/disapproval by the lead firearms instructor or department armorer.

V. EXTRA/OFF-DUTY FIREARMS

- A. It is required that all officers who are authorized to carry a firearm must carry their Departmental issued primary firearm and ammunition when performing an approved law enforcement related extra duty work.
- B. The Department neither encourages nor discourages the carrying of a firearm by sworn officers when they are off duty.
- C. OCGA 16-11-130 establishes exemptions for peace officers regarding weapons carry permits when in the off-duty status.

VI. MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS

- A. The Chief of Police or his designee shall maintain a record of all weapons used by department personnel and approved by the department.

B. Department Issued / Approved Weapons

1. The Chief of Police or his designee shall maintain a complete record on each weapon purchased by the department for issuance to agency personnel. The record shall include but not be limited to the make, model, serial number, and caliber of the weapon.
2. Before a weapon is issued, the department armorer shall inspect it and a recording shall be made of the date of issuance, description of the weapon issued and to whom the weapon was issued by the Chief of Police or his designee.
3. Before a personally owned backup weapon is authorized for use, the department armorer shall inspect it and a recording shall be made of the date of inspection, description of the weapon, and to whom the weapon was authorized for use by the Chief of Police or his designee.
4. The Chief of Police or his designee shall maintain records regarding weapons issued by the department.

C. Replacement Weapon

When a weapon is found to be unsafe or unserviceable, it shall be removed from service by the armorer to be repaired or replaced. The department armorer shall maintain records reflecting changes or replacements.

D. Training records

The lead firearms instructor conducting required qualifications or firearms training shall be responsible for forwarding records of and documenting attendance, personally owned backup weapon information, and pass/fail records to the Chief of Police or his designee. The lead firearms instructor shall also be responsible for entering such training/qualifications onto the GA POST Data Gateway and furnishing documentation of such to the Chief of Police or designee.

E. Department Armorer

The department armorer shall forward a record of annual weapons inspections conducted in accordance with this policy to the Chief of Police or his designee.

VII. DISCHARGE OF FIREARM WRITTEN REPORT

- A. An officer, who discharges a firearm whether intentionally or not, other than in training or for recreational purposes, shall submit a written report to his immediate supervisor within 24 hours of the incident. The immediate supervisor shall then forward the report to the Chief of Police or designee as soon as is practical
- B. The report should describe the circumstances surrounding the incident
- C. If it is determined that the officer was negligent in firing the weapon, disciplinary action may be taken and the officer may be required to undergo firearms training at the discretion of the Chief of Police

VIII. WEAPON LIGHTS

- A. Officers are authorized by the Department to utilize personally owned weapon mounted lights provided the requirements in this policy are met.
- B. Officers are responsible for purchasing duty holsters in the same make, model and finish as the issued holster that can accommodate a weapon mounted light.
- C. The light must be of a quality manufacture, make and model as determined by the lead firearms instructor or department armorer.

- D. Officers who carry a personally owned weapon mounted light must keep the light mounted at all times and shall not attach and remove the light while on duty.
- E. Officers are not authorized to illuminate anything with a weapon mounted light, other than in a training environment, unless the officer is authorized to deploy or brandish the duty weapon in accordance with other provisions of this policy.
- F. If an Officer has been issued a weapon mounted light, he/she shall be required to use only that issued weapon mounted light on his/her duty weapon.